

PUNJAB PROTECTION OF WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE ACT 2016

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CENTERS | VAWC

Comprehensive Reform to empower women and prevent violence against them

Strategic Reforms Unit (formerly, Special Monitoring Unit, Law and Order), works as a think tank for the Punjab Chief Minister under the leadership of Director General SRU, Mr. Salman Sufi and a team of five young female graduates. The unit through its innovative measures has devised a seminal reform to provide an effective system of justice, protection, relief and rehabilitation of violence against women victims. This is one of the biggest projects that has come out of Punjab making the province take a lead in tackling this glaring issue. The comprehensive reform includes:

- Drafting and passage of Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016
- Establishment of Violence Against Women Centers (VAWC)
- Introduction of women-protection against violence chapter in grade 9th-12th school textbooks across province
- Creation of Assistant Inspector General Police (AIG) Women Protection post to protect women against violence without the influence of the male-dominated provincial police
- Establishment of Women Protection Authority for effective implementation of the legislation and VAWCs
- Launch of Pakistan's first ever Women-on Wheels campaign-provision of free motorbike trainings to females followed by an all-female Motorcycle Rally
- Launch of Women Safety Smart Phone application to report incidents of harassment or distressing situation at any place and time with the click of a button.

Pakistan ranks 3rd on list of most dangerous countries for women

In Punjab, daily
Number of Women

6	murdered or attempted
8	raped
11	battered and assaulted
32	abducted

- 21% increase in crimes against women from 2013 to 2014, but conviction rate is still between 1-2.5%
- Only 50% of 36000 reported cases of crimes against women went to court
- 84% of DNA results of rape cases negative because medical examination was conducted after 24 hours of assault

Source: Thomson Reuters Foundation expert poll 2011; DIG Investigation Branch 2013-2014; Punjab Public Prosecution Department; Punjab Forensic Science Agency 2014



V.A.W.C
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CENTRE

Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016 is the most comprehensive legislation passed in the history of Pakistan which aims to provide justice to women victims by establishing and institutionalizing mechanisms which provide protection from all forms of Violence Against Women (VAW) crimes. It is the first legislation in the history of Pakistan which has its own implementation mechanism, known as *Violence Against Women Centers (VAWCs)*. These Centers will be established through a phased program with the pilot VAWC to be set up in Multan in March 2017.

As per the Act, *all wrongs committed against women have been made an offense* including abetment of an offense, domestic violence, sexual violence, psychological abuse, economic abuse, stalking and cybercrime. It also provides *civil remedies to victims* in addition to the already existing criminal ones. These include Protection Order, Monetary Order, Residence Order. Thus, the aggrieved can initiate parallel criminal proceedings for VAW offenses already covered in Pakistan Penal Code and other existing laws if she wants to. Moreover, whereas the aggrieved person under this Act is a female of any age, the aggressor can be a male or a female. The Act also contains penalties for people registering false complaints.

District Women Protection Officer | DWPO

DWPO has been given power under the Act to force enter any place to rescue victim and bring her to VAWC for investigation and rehabilitation. DWPO can also direct the perpetrator to immediately move out of the house for a maximum of 48 hours in order to protect the dignity and reputation of women.

VAWC | All justice delivery departments under one roof



Protection Order

The perpetrator may not be allowed to communicate with the aggrieved or may be directed to stay a distance away from the aggrieved as determined by the court. These Protection Orders will be enforced through GPS tracked electronic ankle/wrist bracelets.

Residence Order

This order will ensure that the aggrieved is not evicted from the house and that she may be relocated to shelter home or an alternate accommodation according to her wishes. The alternate accommodation or rent for it will be provided by the perpetrator.

Monetary Order

The aggrieved will be compensated for any monetary losses occurred be it due to medical treatment expenses, prosecution fees among other things. This order may also protect women from any economic abuse

District Women Protection Committee

Comprised of government officials and civil society members, these committees, to be established in every district, will supervise the working of VAWCs and integrated Shelter Homes. It will also oversee mediation processes taking place at VAWC, and will also ensure that all cases of violence against women registered in any police station of the district are referred to VAWC for investigation, medical examination and collection of forensic evidence.

South Asia's first Violence Against Women Center will be operational in Multan Pakistan in March 2017



Violence Against Women Centers (VAWCs) will be 24-hour, all-women run facilities and will streamline investigation-prosecution case flow process by brining all disconnected justice delivery services under one roof, including: first aid, police reporting and investigation, prosecution, medical examination and treatment, collection of forensic and other evidence, psychological evaluation and counseling as well as post-trauma rehabilitation. These centers aim to address issues such as low conviction rate for Violence Against Women (VAW) crimes, disconnected evidence collection, lack of sensitization to gender-based violence issues, passing of moral judgments and absenteeism of relevant personnel.

There will be real time date integration with audio visual recording of all actions. A toll-free helpline and transport mechanism will be there to facilitate victims. VAWC will have a mediation center for a properly logged mediation/counseling of a non-serious offenses with the consent of the victim, and a facilitation center to assist women on any government-related query. These Centers are also integrated with Shelter Homes where victims will be placed post-investigation. Affiliations with various organizations are being made to impart trainings to victims and to assist their placement back into the society. Apart from this, specialized trainings are being imparted to all the personnel working at VAWC to ensure that they are sensitized to the issue of gender-based violence since they are essential in ensuring that the project is implemented successfully.

Significance

Pakistan is the first country to launch such a comprehensive reform which can be replicated in other countries to effectively end Violence Against Women (VAW). Violence Against Women Centers (VAWCs) will not only serve to dispense and facilitate justice, but will also help in creating awareness regarding the prevention of these crimes. Further, the legislation and VAWC centers aim to not only provide protective services to survivors of violence but to increase conviction of VAW crimes and thus, serve as an effective deterrent in society. Most importantly, VAWC's model can be easily adapted and adjusted according to contextual particularities in countries across the globe. It has particular significance and external validity for countries in the South Asian, Middle-Eastern and Latin American regions.

SALMAN SUFI – Director General, Strategic Reforms Unit

Salman Sufi is a strong advocate of actively introducing reform and gender equality. He is the founder of Strategic Reforms Unit (SRU), a Unit operating as part of Chief Minister's Office that functions as a think tank for the Chief Minister of Punjab, Pakistan. Serving as Director General of the SRU, Sufi has provided a platform for youth to participate in introducing reform and play integral role in key government processes in implementation of reform. Reforms introduced by Sufi have impacted lives of millions all across the province of Punjab with attempt to end all forms of violence against women, women and youth empowerment, human rights, citizen facilitation and awareness programs. Owing to rampant violence against women crimes in Pakistan and low conviction rate of such crimes, Sufi spearheaded drafting and passage of the historic legislation, Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016. This is the most comprehensive piece of legislation passed in the history of Pakistan that incorporates proper implementation processes in the form of Violence Against Women Centres to ensure that the incidence of violence against women crimes is reduced. His passion to see women in Pakistan as an empowered and equal gender led him to introduce women protection chapter in school curriculum, create Pakistan's first female Assistant Inspector Police position, establish Women Protection Authority to ensure sustainability of reforms, and launch Pakistan's first ever Women-on-Wheels (WoW) campaign which aims to increase the independence and mobility of women by providing them with free motorcycle lessons and organizing a rally of female motorcycle riders. Other projects which he has successfully introduced and implemented to facilitate citizens in Punjab include Excise and Taxation reforms, South Asia's first Dealer Vehicle Registration System, establishment of Shehr-e-Khamoshan (Model Graveyards), Punjab Police and Traffic Police reforms, establishment of mobile libraries and restaurant grading system. SRU under his leadership is in the process of drafting legislation for the rights and protection of Senior Citizens and Transgender in Punjab.